

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill (AB) 2871 without my signature.

AB 2871 would eliminate the continuous requirement that a local government declare a state of emergency to authorize the operation of a syringe exchange program.

I am committed to the public health goal of reducing the transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C among injection drug users through syringe exchange programs. Current law requires that local governments renew their declaration of a local emergency due to a critical local public health crisis every two to three weeks. While cumbersome, this reauthorization ensures that local government and local public health officials review the status of the syringe exchange program when deciding to continue the program.

I am willing to reconsider the concept of this bill in the future if there are appropriate local control measures in place. It is imperative that local communities, public health officials and local law enforcement are provided the opportunity to provide input to local leaders to ensure that the health benefits of a syringe exchange program outweigh any potential adverse impact on the public welfare.

For these reasons I am returning this bill without my signature.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger